

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6269
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AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 CAPE TOWN 0990

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, SF, US
SUBJECT: PIK BOTHA STATEMENT TO PARLIAMENT

1. SUMMARY: HIGHLIGHT OF PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS VOTE JUNE 13 AND 14 WAS PIK BOTHA SPEECH WHICH CALMLY AND RATIONALLY OUTLINED SOUTH AFRICAN DIFFERENCES WITH THE UNITED STATES. BOTHA DID RAISE NOW FAMILIAR THEMES OF COMMUNIST THREAT AND UNWILLINGNESS OF "AMERICAN PEOPLE" TO SEE S.A. DESTROYED, BUT PLAYED THAT DOWN. HE DID REFER AT LENGTH TO U.S. INSISTENCE ON ONE-MAN-ONE-VOTE, BUT REFRAINED FROM CRITICISM OF U.S. ON THIS POINT AND STATED HOPE OF CONTINUED FRIENDSHIP WITH U.S. BOTHA ALSO SPOKE OF DIFFERENCES OF OPINION IN NATIONAL PARTY ON NEED FOR CHANGE IN S.A. OPPOSITION SPEAKERS IN DEBATE DWELLED HEAVILY ON U.S.-S.A. RELATIONS AND EXPLAINED THEIR VIEW THAT U.S. POLICY WAS IN FACT NOT UNACCEPTABLE. END SUMMARY.

2. FOREIGN MINISTER PIK BOTHA ADDRESSED PARLIAMENT FOR AN HOUR EVENING OF JUNE 13 DURING DEBATE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS VOTE. IN VIEW OF BOTHA'S RECENT OUTBURSTS, SPEECH WAS CONFIDENTIAL

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REMARKABLE FOR ITS MODERATE, UNEMOTIONAL AND ALMOST CONCILIATORY TENOR. FOR THE MOST PART BOTHA STUCK TO IMPORTANT ISSUES AND REFRAINED FROM LENGTHY AND EMOTIONAL CRITICISM OF OPPOSITION WHICH HAS CHARACTERIZED MANY RECENT NP SPEECHES. BOTHA DID STATE THAT COMMUNIST THREAT WAS A FACT OF LIFE, BUT THEN DISMISSED SUBJECT SAYING, "I DON'T WANT TO RAISE THE COMMUNIST BOGY AGAIN."

3. MUCH OF BOTHA STATEMENT WAS DEVOTED TO RELATIONS WITH U.S. BOTHA SAID S.A. WANTED TO BE FRIENDS WITH U.S. AND WOULD CONTINUE TO TRY TO BE FRIENDS. QUOTING VICE PRESIDENT MONDALE, HOWEVER, BOTHA SAID THAT THERE ARE FUNDAMENTAL AND PROFOUND DIFFERENCES OF OPINION BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. HE SAID THAT NATIONAL PARTY POLICY WAS TO END DISCRIMINATION AND ALLOW FOR "FULL PARTICIPATION" OF ALL OF THE "PEOPLES" OF SOUTH AFRICA. U.S. POLICY, HOWEVER, CALLED FOR "ONE-MAN-ONE-VOTE IN A UNITARY STATE," A POSITION UNACCEPTABLE TO S.A. BOTHA QUOTED FROM MONDALE AND YOUNG SPEECHES TO SHOW THAT THIS WAS U.S. POLICY, AND THEN ADDED EVEN IF IT WERE NOT HE WOULD BE REQUIRED BY HIS POSITION TO ASSUME THE WORST AND TAKE STATEMENTS AT FACE VALUE UNLESS THEY WERE RETRACTED. FAILURE TO MAKE THIS INTERPRETATION WOULD LEAVE HIM OPEN TO CRITICISM FOR WISHFUL THINKING. BOTHA ALSO REPEATED STATEMENT THAT "MILLIONS OF AMERICANS" DID NOT WISH TO SEE S.A. DESTROYED, BUT REFRAINED FROM ADDING S.A. INTENTION TO APPEAL TO THEM. HE LAMENTED FACT THAT NEW U.S. ADMINISTRATION HAD NOT, AS HAD PREVIOUS ADMINISTRATION, EMPHASIZED UNIQUENESS OF SOUTH AFRICAN SITUATION AND RIGHT OF WHITES TO EXIST. BOTHA ADDED THAT HE WAS ENCOURAGED BY PRESIDENT CARTER'S RECENT STATEMENT THAT U.S. DID NOT WISH OVERTHROW OF S.A. GOVERNMENT AND THAT HE WILL EXPLORE THIS FURTHER ON HIS UPCOMING VISIT TO U.S.

4. BOTHA SPEECH ALSO CONTAINED STRONG UNDERLINE VERLIGTE
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END UNDERLINE STATEMENTS ON DOMESTIC POLICY. HE REITERATED THAT NP POLICY WAS TO MOVE AWAY FROM DISCRIMINATION, AND SAID THAT CHANGE MUST COME IN S.A. NOT BECAUSE OF OUTSIDE PRESURE BUT BECAUSE IT IS RIGHT. HE ALSO MADE UNUSUAL BUT OBVIOUS COMMENT THAT HE AND OTHER MEMBERS OF HIS PARTY DID NOT ALWAYS SEE EYE TO EYE ON NEED FOR CERTAIN CHANGES AND ON PACE OF CHANGE.

5. IN FOLLOW-UP STATEMENT TO PARLIAMENT JUNE 14, BOTHA DEVOTED MUCH OF HIS TIME TO APPEAL FOR UNITED STATES UNDERSTANDING OF THE COMPLEXITIES OF SOUTH AFRICAN SITUATION. HE COMMENTED THAT BLACKS IN SOUTH AFRICA BETTER OFF THAN ELSEWHERE ON CONTINENT AND ASKED U.S. TO "EVALUATE PROGRESS IN MY COUNTRY IN AN AFRICAN CONTEXT, AND TO GIVE US CREDIT FOR WHAT WE HAVE ACEHIEVED." HE ALSO CALLED ON U.S. TO STRENGTHEN ITS FRIENDS AGAINST "SOVIET CREEPING IMPERIALISM" IN AFRICA. DESPITE SOME CRITICISM OF U.S. "SELECTIVE MORALITY" IN "DEMANDING" MORE OF S.A. THAN OF OTHER COUNTRIES, BOTHA'S TONE WAS

AGAIN MODERATE AND NOT CONDEMNATORY.

6. OPPOSITION SPEECHES ALSO FOCUSED ON S.A. RELATIONS WITH U.S. JAPIE BASSON (UP) AND COLIN EGLIN (PRP) BOTH ADDRESSED RELEVANT ISSUES AND MADE POINT THAT U.S. WAS NOT ATTEMPTING TO PRESCRIBE BLUEPRINT OR TIMETABLE FOR S.A., BUT POINTING OUT NEED FOR FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE. THEY DIFFERED WITH BOTHA INTERPRETATION THAT U.S. "DEMAND" WAS "ONE-MAN-ONE-VOTE IN A UNITARY STATE."

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 CAPE TOWN 0990

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COLIN EGLIN WAS PARTICULARLY HELPFUL. HE SAID THE NEGATIVE ATTITUDE OF THE GOVERNMENT TOWARD THE US APPEARED TO BE BASED ON TWO HYPOTHESES. "ONE IS THAT THE WEST HAS LOST ITS WILL TO OPPOSE SOVIET COMMUNISM AND IS PREPARED TO SACRIFICE RHODESIA, SWA, AND EVEN SOUTH AFRICA IN THE FACE OF A DETERMINED SOVIET THREAT. THE SECOND IS BEING USED TO CONCEAL FROM SOUTH AFRICANS THE IMPORTANCE OF THE MESSAGE RECEIVED FROM THE US IN VIENNA. THIS IS THAT THE US AND THE WEST ARE DEMANDING THAT WE ADOPT SPECIFIC INTERNAL POLICIES WHICH THEY HAVE PRESCRIBED FOR US." EGLIN SAID THE FIRST IS A DANGEROUS MISREADING OF THE REALITIES OF WESTERN STRATEGY. "THE WEST IS CONCERNED ABOUT COMMUNISM -- IT IS

CONCERNED ABOUT SOVIET IMPERIALISM -- AS ARE THE MAJORITY OF THE STATES OF AFRICA. FAR FROM IGNORING THE SOVIET INTEREST IN SOUTHERN AFRICA, THE WEST IS BUSY TRYING TO COUNTER THE SOVIET INITIATIVES." THE PRESENCE OF YOUNG AND ROWLANDS AT THE RECENT MAPUTO CONFERENCE WAS EVIDENCE OF THIS. THEY
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EFFECTIVELY COUNTERED SOVIET TACTICS AND ENHANCED WESTERN INFLUENCE. THERE HAD BEEN A CHANGE IN US STRATEGY BUT THIS SHOULD NOT BE CONFUSED WITH A CHANGE OF OBJECTIVE. THE NEW STRATEGY WAS BASED ON CONFIDENCE IN THE DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM AND NOT ON DEFENSIVE CONTAINMENT. AS FOR THE SECOND HYPOTHESIS, EGLIN SAID, IT WAS IN THE COUNTRY'S INTEREST TO LOOK BEYOND THE SLOGANS AT THE BASIC MESSAGE. SOUTH AFRICA SHOULD MEET THE CHALLENGE CONTAINED IN THE MESSAGE INSTEAD OF EVADING IT.

7. COMMENT. AT A LUNCHEON AT THE END OF NAMIBIA TALKS AND AGAIN IN OUR MEETING ON MONDAY, I HAD OPPORTUNITY TO EXPRESS TO BOTHA MY SERIOUS CONCERN OVER HOW SAG OFFICIALS HAD DISTORTED BASIC MESSAGE PRESENTED BY BICE PRESIDENT MONDALE AT VIENNA BY ACCUSING THE USG OF DICTATING A FORMULA OF ONE-MAN-ONE-VOTE IN A UNITARY STATE FOR SOUTH AFRICA. I REMINDED HIM THAT THE VICE PRESIDENT HAD REFRAINED FROM PRESCRIBING SPECIFIC SOLUTIONS. HE HAD CALLED FOR FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE BASED ON DOING AWAY WITH RACIAL DISCRIMINATION AND ALLOWING FULL PARTICIPATION BUT AT THE SAME TIME MADE CLEAR THAT THE CHOICE WAS SOUTH AFRICA'S. I TOLD HIM I REGARDED THE WAY VIENNA HAD BEEN PORTRAYED AS A DISSERVICE TO THE GENERAL EFFORT TO WORK FOR THE UNDERSTANDING NEEDED TO OBTAIN PUBLIC ACCEPTABILITY FOR FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE. ON BOTH OCCASIONS BOTHA WAS DEFENSIVE, EXPLAINING (1) HE HAD TO TAKE POSITION HE DID BECAUSE HE WAS BEING ASKED TO STATE HIS POSITION ON THE ONE-MAN-ONE-VOTE QUESTION, AND (2) HE COULD NOT PREVENT COLLEAGUES FROM TALKING ABOUT FOREIGN AFFAIRS WHEN THEY SHOULD LEAVE THAT TO HIM. KNOWING THAT HE WILL BE TALKING TO U.S. OFFICIALS NEXT WEEK, HE SEEMS TO BE MELLOWING HIS PUBLIC STATEMENTS. END COMMENT.BOWLDER

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